

Help! We've fallen and we need to get up!

Report Written and Submitted by: Rev. Wanda M. McDaniels

Old Age is Golden, Huh?
They told me old age was golden,
When I was twenty-two.
My parents had a good life.
And felt that I should too.

Well now that I am seventy-one
And I see through these two dim eyes.
I often wonder whom,
Started those darn lies.

They had to be rich and famous.
With a silver spoon in their mouth.
And never missed a meal one time.
Could travel west, east, north or south.

They they decided to run for congress.
To make laws for people in need.
Said, "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps,"
When some didn't have shoes on their feet.

So they created government organizations
To supplement poor folk's income
They say, "Take it or leave it,"
Some treat you like you're scum.

It bothers me when some folk,
Haven't had storms in their life.
Tornados of sickness and death
Or hurricanes of financial strife.

But poor folks have no voice.
And if we do speak up
We are labeled "troublemakers"
I was even told to shut up!

When the President and Congress declare war.
And many go out and fight,
And if they come home wounded
Many suffer wounds and mental fright.

Yes, the VA Hospitals do their best
For medical and mental care.
But is it really enough service,
For the terrible moments they share?

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!
This seems to be the problem.
There never seems to be enough,
And no one knows how to solve them.

So what are some solutions?
To get us out of this mess?
Let's put our heads together
And come out with some positive test.

One thing you must remember,
There is wisdom in old age.
We are a people with pride and honor
We've made it to this stage.

So now my poetry will end.
But I must honor Aretha Faust.
Who made some drastic changes in life.
(She taught me to open my big mouth)

She started a Welfare Mother's organization
That helped young mothers survive.
Many good services were opened
So they could build a better life.

So now as Senior Citizens,
We come to plead our case.
Stop taking away our dignity
As we complete life's race

God gave us these golden years to enjoy,
Before we reach those pearly gates
So help us get there with dignity.
Is my prayer for seniors sake.

SOME SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Because it cost so much to run and win a congressional seat. Create committees with GRASSROOT SENIOR CITIZENS, that can implement affordable health care services, housing, job opportunities and other services that need to be available to them.

2. Establish travel throughout Kansas and hold forums with GRASSROOT Senior Citizens who are unable to get around and honestly LISTEN to their struggles. Go to Rest Homes and health care centers and listen to their issues. Hold forums for those family members who are health care providers and THEN IMPLEMENT better care for the sick and shut-in.
3. Allow those GRASSROOT persons that can take these concerns not only to State Congress but also to Washington DC where housing, physical and mental needs can be addressed. Allow compensation in your budget to do this.
4. Provide better eye and dental care to Senior Citizens who are on Medicare and Medicaid!
5. Allow Faith Based Churches and Organizations to build affordable housing and medical care facilities that will treat seniors with dignity. Allow NEW organizations to have the same chance to serve in these areas. Help us build more services for the drug abusers, the alcoholics, the homeless and other necessities to make life more bearable.
6. Encourage the churches to hold forums as they did in Wichita at the Tabernacle Baptist Church. LET THE PEOPLE TALK AND LET LEGISLATORS LISTEN. Hold our legislators accountable for their actions of not finding enough money to help support the causes of Senior Citizens. I don't mean just at election time, but during the seasons when there are no elections.
7. STOP THIS MESS OF NOT ALLOWING GRANDPARENTS TO RAISE THEIR OWN GRANDCHILDREN WHEN THERE IS A NEED FOR THEM TO DO SO! WHY MUST THIS STATE KEEP BREAKING UP FAMILIES WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS AND GIVE GRANDCHILDREN TO STRANGERS, WHEN THERE IS A GRANDPARENT WILLING TO RAISE THEIR OWN. YOU WILL COMPENSATE OTHERS TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN, BUT NOT THE SAME AMOUNT TO THE GRANDPARENTS!
8. There needs to be a better way for low income Senior Citizens to get prescription and medical needs. I love the organizations that are available, but many of the Service Providers available are not known to the average senior citizens. There has to be a better way to get this information to Senior Citizens so they can get the medical care they need. Have you ever been sick today and can't get an appointment with your Doctor or Health Provider until a month later? You end up going to the Emergency Room in a Hospital and you wait and wait and wait? This cost the State an unnecessary amount of money. Then when you need to be admitted to the Hospital, what right does the State have telling the hospital and doctors how long you need to stay?
9. Why does the State use so much money sending Medical Cards every month to their recipients? They used to be sent once a year, unless that person was no longer eligible or had died. Now every month the State uses up so much money on paper and postage sending the card as they do now.
10. I don't know who sets the guidelines on food stamps and spend-downs, but that needs to be revamped. Some senior citizens are on special diets and this care is to help them get the foods they need. I do not have time to address all of the issues, but these are some of them that I hear from the senior citizen community and/or witnesses throughout the State of Kansas.
11. Since all of the utility companies do not have offices in some of the cities any more, senior citizens and others on fixed incomes must pay extra to pay those bills. If they

cannot drive, then they must pay extra money for transportation to get them paid, which takes away food or medication money.

12. Last, but not least, there will come a time, we will be held accountable for our deeds and actions.

HELP! WE'VE FALLEN AND WE NEED TO GET UP!!!

Thank you, Humbly Submitted,

Minister Wanda M. McDaniels.